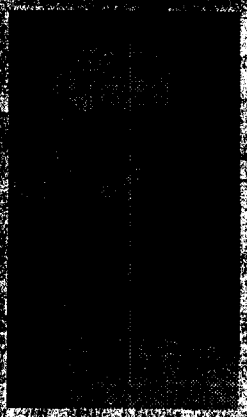
Church Promises to Probe Charges of CIA Infiltration

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) yesterday promised an immediate investigation of charges that the Central Intelligence Agency had periodically "infiltrated" the White House and other executive agencies.

Both CIA Director William E. Colby and the White House strenuously denied the allegations. Colby denounced them as "vicious nonsense" and vicious nonsense."

Church, chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, said it was "learned to refrain from jumping to conclusions" in the Senate CIA investigation thus far, "and therefore an appropriate investigation will be made."

Members of the stalemated House intelligence committee disclosed Wednesday that they had been told of secret evidence that the CIA had a long-standing practice of "penetrating" the White House and other agencies and that the



WILLIAM E. COLBY
... "vicious nonsense"

undercover operatives had included a high-level aide to President Nixon.

The congressmen also said that the House committee's staff director, Searle Field, after a recent inspection of CIA documents, believed that not even presidents were aware of the White House "infiltration."

Colby and White House press secretary Ron Nessen insisted that no CIA agents was ever deliberately placed on any presidential staff, but they were not entirely clear about the nature of all the CIA assignments at the White House or who at the White House would have known about them.

Speaking with reporters before and after a closed hearing of a House Post Office subcommittee on another issue, Colby said he had "no idea" whether any CIA employees ever had access to the Oval Office.

"What the White House does with the people we detail to them is," of course, the White House's business," the CIA director said.

Nessen said some CIA employees may be working at the

See CIA, A11, Col. 1

CIA From [illegible]

House now, but he in- that "they are here only." He said at least on the staff of the Na- Security Council and may be a handful of who work elsewhere, serious things."

briefing when the said. He said none personnel now at White House was working undercover and I have been told in the past there never has been."

Asked whether the CIA workers reported daily to the agency on what they had learned, the White House press secretary said, "as far as know, no," but did not rule out the possibility.

Asked whether such reports occasionally would be made to the CIA, Colby said only that they are very clearly instructed that when they go down there, they work for the White House and not the CIA."

The CIA director drew a blank on the report that the agency's operatives included a high-ranking aide in the Nixon White House, reportedly somewhere just below the level of the staff director H. R. Haldeman and domestic affairs advisor John D. Ehrlichman.

"I can't identify that reference at all," Colby said.

Colby insisted, however, that the "CIA has never done anything with respect to the White House that's not known to the White House." He said various White House officials should be informed of this or that assignment, but not necessarily the President.

"An individual might be doing a clerical job or something of that nature and the President wouldn't necessarily know about that himself," Colby declared. He said CIA workers carried out "various functions connected with [illegible] part of the White House [illegible] intelligence [illegible]

[illegible] did not elaborate.

By contrast, Nessen indicated that "the President and a lot of other people know" of such CIA assignment to the White House. He said, "It shows up on the payroll."

The White House press secretary said his information was from various sources, but declined to identify them. "This is barking up a nonexistent tree," Nessen said. "I believe the people I talked to."

The allegations aired by members of the House committee Wednesday reportedly were based in part on a 1973 in-house compilation of questionable CIA practices made by the CIA inspector general's office.

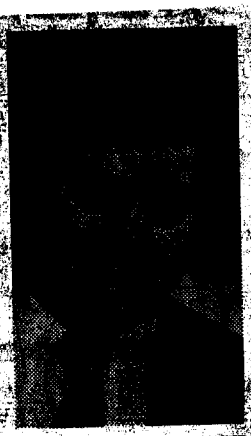
Church said, "It would be a transgression of the most provocative kind" if the charges were true, but emphasized that he was not in a position to assess them at this point.

"I should think that the agency would refrain from spying on Presidents," Church said. [illegible] other developments yesterday.

Colby acknowledged he made a "mistake" in reporting to President Ford last December that the FBI had been informed from the outset about the illegal CIA surveillance program that began in 1953 and lasted nearly 20 years. The Rockefeller commission, which disclosed that the FBI was not apprised of the operation until several years after it started, stated it "very accurately," Colby said. He added that his report to Mr. Ford, prompted by disclosures in the New York Times, was rushed together in a single day. He attributed the mistake to the fact that this was the information "I was dealing with at the time."

Church said his committee's investigation of the FBI was being hampered by the failure of the FBI and the Justice Department to supply requested documents concerning a long list of allegations.

As a result, the committee asked Attorney General Edward H. Levi and FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley to appear next week and explain "why two months have passed" since the bulk of the requests were made. Church said Kelley had asked for a chance to tell the committee in turn about the "highly sensitive" nature of documents concerning the CIA-Justice Department relationship that



SEN. FRANK CHURCH
... inquiry "appropriate"

already have been turned over.

Senate committee counsel Fritz Schwarz told reporters that the withheld documents are needed to check out allegations of FBI political abuses, such as the use of secret files, electronic surveillance and break-ins, organization and support of purportedly radical organizations, questionable use of FBI informers, and various disruptive activities.

The Church committee continued its secret hearings into CIA involvement in foreign assassination schemes and murder attempts with testimony from several witness, including former Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thomas Parriott, a former CIA official who served as executive secretary in the late Eisenhower and early Kennedy years to the "special group," a subcommittee of the National Security Council in charge of covert operations.

Rusk had no comment except to remark on completing his testimony that, "I don't have time to brood about the past."

Apparently sensitive to the point, Church volunteered to reporters, before Rusk testified, that probing the past was not "a pleasant duty" but one that must be performed in hopes of determining whether the CIA was ordered to engage "in this dirty business" by top government officials or whether it was simply an agency "running wild."